

**Narrator:**

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Along with more traditional security topics like nonproliferation and arms control, the Obama administration considers global issues such as climate change and food security to be immediate security challenges. That message is crucial as U.S. diplomats participate in the 64th United Nations General Assembly, which opened in New York on September 15th.

The common theme among nonproliferation, women in conflict, food security and climate change is that those types of issues “have an impact on real people” as well as on governments and have immediate impacts on security, according to the State Department’s Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Esther Brimmer.

The Obama administration is pursuing a more multilateral approach to achieving its major foreign policy goals than its predecessor did, and the main source for the new emphasis is the president himself. Brimmer said the United States is “definitely back on multilateral affairs” and that President Obama realizes that both multilateral and bilateral cooperation are keys to advancing major U.S. foreign policy goals. The major challenges of the 21st century are transnational in character and have to be dealt with by working with other states.

The issues the global community is confronting combine in many different ways and present unique challenges. For example, the United States no longer approaches climate change from only a health-and-science point of view. The Obama administration recognizes that there are also immediate security implications, such as mass migrations of people due to drought, as well as disputes over water.

Food security also constitutes an immediate security issue. Millions of people across the globe face long-term hunger, and rises in food prices raise security concerns from food riots and have caused human tragedies. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon plan to co-host an event in New York to highlight this issue.

Clinton also plans to attend a U.N. Security Council session scheduled for September 30th to create new measures to prevent violence against women in combat zones. The secretary has taken a deep personal interest in what the international community can do on this issue, according to Brimmer. Clinton took opportunities on her recent trip to Africa to speak with victims and caregivers to understand the impact of this type of violence.

President Obama will chair a September 24th U.N. Security Council summit on nuclear nonproliferation. Brimmer said there have only been five sessions held at the summit level, and this would be the first to be chaired by a U.S. president. Obama’s chairmanship is, in a sense, the kickoff for a whole year when the United States will really be highlighting nonproliferation issues.

The Obama administration will also continue to pursue U.N. reform in the upcoming session. The U.S. approach to reform will be more like a consultant to facilitate reform from inside the organization.

Iran can abandon its nuclear weapons development program and join the international community, or it can face increased international isolation, according to State Department officials.

Talks with Iranian officials on October 1st are regarded as a crucial first step in resuming stalled negotiations over what many world powers believe are Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear weapons program. Experts believe that a nuclear-armed Iran could pose a destabilizing security risk.

State Department officials say that the United States plans to address the issue of Iran not living up to its obligations, and that the nuclear issue will be front and center in the talks.

A spokeswoman for European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana confirmed to news agencies September 14th that Solana had spoken with Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, and that they had agreed to a meeting on October 1st. State Department officials said no decision has been made on where to hold the talks, though it is likely to be at a neutral site.

China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, collectively known as the P-5+1, have been negotiating with Iran over its nuclear program. However, talks stalled about a year ago when the P-5+1 insisted that Iran would have to suspend uranium enrichment. The group includes the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, or P-5, and Germany. This group grew out of earlier efforts by France, Germany and the United Kingdom to convince Iranian officials to suspend uranium enrichment in return for a package of incentives.

Uranium enrichment is one necessary component of building a nuclear bomb. Iran may now have enough enriched nuclear fuel to make a bomb, a senior U.S. diplomat told the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, in Vienna on September 9th. A new report by IAEA Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei describes how Iran has, at a minimum, over 1,400 kilograms of low-enriched uranium hexafluoride, a critical ingredient in nuclear bomb-making that can be further enriched to weapons-grade material. ElBaradei told the IAEA Board of Governors meeting that Iran has not suspended its enrichment activities or its work on heavy-water-related projects, which are required by the U.N. Security Council.

At a White House briefing, press secretary Robert Gibbs said countries around the world are concerned about Iran's nuclear weapons program. The U.N. Security Council has imposed three rounds of political and economic sanctions to convince Iranian leaders to halt uranium enrichment and give up plans for a weapons program.

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